

CENTER FOR DISABILITY ACCESS  
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

## Scott Johnson

Plaintiff,

V.

**San Mateo Mall, LLC, a California  
Limited Liability Company**

## Defendants.

**Case No.**

# **Complaint For Damages And Injunctive Relief For Violations Of: Americans With Disabilities Act; Unruh Civil Rights Act**

Plaintiff Scott Johnson complains of San Mateo Mall, LLC, a California Limited Liability Company; and alleges as follows:

## PARTIES:

1. Plaintiff is a California resident with physical disabilities. Plaintiff is a level C-5 quadriplegic. He cannot walk and also has significant manual dexterity impairments. He uses a wheelchair for mobility and has a specially equipped van.

2. Defendant San Mateo Mall, LLC owned the real property located at or about 2727 S. El Camino Real, San Mateo, California, upon which the business “Central Computers” operates, between March 2019 and November 2020.

1       3. Defendant San Mateo Mall, LLC owns the real property located at or  
 2 about 2727 S. El Camino Real, San Mateo, California, upon which the business  
 3 "Central Computers" operates, currently.

4       4. Plaintiff does not know the true names of Defendants, their business  
 5 capacities, their ownership connection to the property and business, or their  
 6 relative responsibilities in causing the access violations herein complained of,  
 7 and alleges a joint venture and common enterprise by all such Defendants.  
 8 Plaintiff is informed and believes that each of the Defendants herein is  
 9 responsible in some capacity for the events herein alleged, or is a necessary  
 10 party for obtaining appropriate relief. Plaintiff will seek leave to amend when  
 11 the true names, capacities, connections, and responsibilities of the Defendants  
 12 are ascertained.

13

14       **JURISDICTION & VENUE:**

15       5. The Court has subject matter jurisdiction over the action pursuant to 28  
 16 U.S.C. § 1331 and § 1343(a)(3) & (a)(4) for violations of the Americans with  
 17 Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101, et seq.

18       6. Pursuant to supplemental jurisdiction, an attendant and related cause  
 19 of action, arising from the same nucleus of operative facts and arising out of  
 20 the same transactions, is also brought under California's Unruh Civil Rights  
 21 Act, which act expressly incorporates the Americans with Disabilities Act.

22       7. Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331(b) and is  
 23 founded on the fact that the real property which is the subject of this action is  
 24 located in this district and that Plaintiff's cause of action arose in this district.

25

26       **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS:**

27       8. Plaintiff went to Central Computers in March 2019, April 2019, June  
 28 2019 and November 2020 with the intention to avail himself of its goods or

1 services motivated in part to determine if the defendants comply with the  
2 disability access laws.

3 9. Central Computers is a facility open to the public, a place of public  
4 accommodation, and a business establishment.

5 10. Unfortunately, on the dates of the plaintiff's visits, the defendants failed  
6 to provide wheelchair accessible parking in conformance with the ADA  
7 Standards as it relates to wheelchair users like the plaintiff.

8 11. Central Computers provides parking to its customers but fails to provide  
9 wheelchair accessible parking.

10 12. One problem that plaintiff encountered is that the parking stalls and  
11 access aisles marked and reserved for persons with disabilities had slopes that  
12 exceeded 2.1%.

13 13. Plaintiff believes that there are other features of the parking that likely  
14 fail to comply with the ADA Standards and seeks to have fully compliant  
15 parking available for wheelchair users.

16 14. On information and belief the defendants currently fail to provide  
17 wheelchair accessible parking.

18 15. These barriers relate to and impact the plaintiff's disability. Plaintiff  
19 personally encountered these barriers.

20 16. As a wheelchair user, the plaintiff benefits from and is entitled to use  
21 wheelchair accessible facilities. By failing to provide accessible facilities, the  
22 defendants denied the plaintiff full and equal access.

23 17. The failure to provide accessible facilities created difficulty and  
24 discomfort for the Plaintiff.

25 18. The defendants have failed to maintain in working and useable  
26 conditions those features required to provide ready access to persons with  
27 disabilities.

28 19. The barriers identified above are easily removed without much

1 difficulty or expense. They are the types of barriers identified by the  
 2 Department of Justice as presumably readily achievable to remove and, in fact,  
 3 these barriers are readily achievable to remove. Moreover, there are numerous  
 4 alternative accommodations that could be made to provide a greater level of  
 5 access if complete removal were not achievable.

6 20. Plaintiff will return to Central Computers to avail himself of its goods or  
 7 services and to determine compliance with the disability access laws once it is  
 8 represented to him that Central Computers and its facilities are accessible.  
 9 Plaintiff is currently deterred from doing so because of his knowledge of the  
 10 existing barriers and his uncertainty about the existence of yet other barriers  
 11 on the site. If the barriers are not removed, the plaintiff will face unlawful and  
 12 discriminatory barriers again.

13 21. Given the obvious and blatant nature of the barriers and violations  
 14 alleged herein, the plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that there are  
 15 other violations and barriers on the site that relate to his disability. Plaintiff will  
 16 amend the complaint, to provide proper notice regarding the scope of this  
 17 lawsuit, once he conducts a site inspection. However, please be on notice that  
 18 the plaintiff seeks to have all barriers related to his disability remedied. See  
 19 *Doran v. 7-11*, 524 F.3d 1034 (9th Cir. 2008) (holding that once a plaintiff  
 20 encounters one barrier at a site, he can sue to have all barriers that relate to his  
 21 disability removed regardless of whether he personally encountered them).

22

**23 I. FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION: VIOLATION OF THE AMERICANS  
 24 WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (On behalf of Plaintiff and against all  
 25 Defendants.) (42 U.S.C. section 12101, et seq.)**

26 22. Plaintiff re-pleads and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth  
 27 again herein, the allegations contained in all prior paragraphs of this  
 28 complaint.

1       23. Under the ADA, it is an act of discrimination to fail to ensure that the  
2       privileges, advantages, accommodations, facilities, goods and services of any  
3       place of public accommodation is offered on a full and equal basis by anyone  
4       who owns, leases, or operates a place of public accommodation. See 42 U.S.C.  
5       § 12182(a). Discrimination is defined, *inter alia*, as follows:

- 6       a. A failure to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices,  
7       or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford  
8       goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or  
9       accommodations to individuals with disabilities, unless the  
10       accommodation would work a fundamental alteration of those  
11       services and facilities. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).
- 12       b. A failure to remove architectural barriers where such removal is  
13       readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv). Barriers are  
14       defined by reference to the ADA Standards.
- 15       c. A failure to make alterations in such a manner that, to the  
16       maximum extent feasible, the altered portions of the facility are  
17       readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities,  
18       including individuals who use wheelchairs or to ensure that, to the  
19       maximum extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and  
20       the bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the  
21       altered area, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals  
22       with disabilities. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2).

23       24. When a business provides parking for its customers, it must provide  
24       accessible parking.

25       25. Here, accessible parking has not been provided in conformance with the  
26       ADA Standards.

27       26. The Safe Harbor provisions of the 2010 Standards are not applicable  
28       here because the conditions challenged in this lawsuit do not comply with the

1 1991 Standards.

2 27. A public accommodation must maintain in operable working condition  
3 those features of its facilities and equipment that are required to be readily  
4 accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities. 28 C.F.R. § 36.211(a).

5 28. Here, the failure to ensure that the accessible facilities were available  
6 and ready to be used by the plaintiff is a violation of the law.

7

**8 II. SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION: VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL  
9 RIGHTS ACT (On behalf of Plaintiff and against all Defendants.) (Cal. Civ.  
10 Code § 51-53.)**

11 29. Plaintiff repleads and incorporates by reference, as if fully set forth  
12 again herein, the allegations contained in all prior paragraphs of this  
13 complaint. The Unruh Civil Rights Act (“Unruh Act”) guarantees, *inter alia*,  
14 that persons with disabilities are entitled to full and equal accommodations,  
15 advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishment of  
16 every kind whatsoever within the jurisdiction of the State of California. Cal.  
17 Civ. Code § 51(b).

18 30. The Unruh Act provides that a violation of the ADA is a violation of the  
19 Unruh Act. Cal. Civ. Code, § 51(f).

20 31. Defendants’ acts and omissions, as herein alleged, have violated the  
21 Unruh Act by, *inter alia*, denying, or aiding, or inciting the denial of, Plaintiff’s  
22 rights to full and equal use of the accommodations, advantages, facilities,  
23 privileges, or services offered.

24 32. Because the violation of the Unruh Civil Rights Act resulted in difficulty,  
25 discomfort or embarrassment for the plaintiff, the defendants are also each  
26 responsible for statutory damages, i.e., a civil penalty. (Civ. Code § 55.56(a)-  
27 (c).)

28 33. Although the plaintiff encountered frustration and difficulty by facing

1 discriminatory barriers, even manifesting itself with minor and fleeting  
2 physical symptoms, the plaintiff does not value this very modest physical  
3 personal injury greater than the amount of the statutory damages.

4

5

**PRAYER:**

6 Wherefore, Plaintiff prays that this Court award damages and provide  
7 relief as follows:

8 1. For injunctive relief, compelling Defendants to comply with the  
9 Americans with Disabilities Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act. Note: the  
10 plaintiff is not invoking section 55 of the California Civil Code and is not  
11 seeking injunctive relief under the Disabled Persons Act at all.

12 2. Damages under the Unruh Civil Rights Act, which provides for actual  
13 damages and a statutory minimum of \$4,000 for each offense.

14 3. Reasonable attorney fees, litigation expenses and costs of suit, pursuant  
15 to 42 U.S.C. § 12205; and Cal. Civ. Code §§ 52.

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Dated: February 3, 2021

CENTER FOR DISABILITY ACCESS

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By: 

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Amanda Seabock, Esq.  
Attorney for plaintiff

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